

# EPA Seeks Pollution Case Against Pristine, Drum Firm

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Reporter

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Monday asked the Attorney General to prosecute Cincinnati Drum Co., Reading, for polluting Mill Creek with deadly chemicals and dirtying the air with its smoke.

The firm is being asked for prosecution under the Clean Air Act. Cincinnati Drum Co. Inc., owns its Reading property and stockholders with Pristine, including the stream.

The presentation to the Attorney General is not a formal complaint against Cincinnati Drum or Pristine, a firm which recycles and treats hazardous ingredients in hazardous waste, for safe disposal or to reuse them.

Neither firm ever has been cited by EPA.

Dr. Riley N. Kinman, chairman of Pristine's board, said Monday. "The water is coming off our roof and washing over the ground, picking up some leaked chemicals," he said, and although Pristine is meeting its incinerator EPA specifications, he said there have been problems with the clean air standards.

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Prompted in part by a recent USEPA action, Jennifer Tiell said she was at the office. "I wanted to beat the court," she said. "I fear heavy federal penalties would be an industrial waste, rather than retained."

AND Cincinnati

Drum, Big Four and Smalley Rds., can operate without polluting, Tiell said, and that is the approach OEPA is taking in submitting its evidence to the Attorney General (AG).

"I think we can work out something. I hope the 'AG' has the same attitude."

It could be weeks before OEPA knows whether the Attorney General will hale the two Reading companies into Hamilton County Common Pleas Court and what the charges might be.

"I think there is 'probable cause.' My staff agrees with that," Tiell said.

Even if pollution control problems are corrected, Tiell says she wants to go to court; OEPA believes penalties deter repeat offenses and warn others.

OEPA investigators said they found "high concentrations" of lead, zinc, chromium, iron, vanadium, titanium, arsenic and mercury running into Mill Creek from Pristine and Cincinnati Drum.

"THE SAME metals that show up in the creek were found on Pristine and Cincinnati Drum property," Tiell added. Those poisons come from leaking or used drums, Tiell said, "and you can't very well stop the rain."

But you can stop the runoff, she said, and treat it before it allowing it off the site.

Neither firm has dikes or water treatment facilities which could avoid this problem, Kinman said, but "No one has ever provided us with these recommendations that I know of."

OEPA also wants Pristine to build concrete pads on which to stack the drums. This would make pollution control more effective, Tiell said.

Pristine has some concrete pads, Kinman replied. The firm had submitted plans to build more, but differences with Reading fire officials over wiring in the laboratory shut the facility down earlier this year for a second time.

"WE STILL plan to pour those pads," he added.

Steve White, an OEPA air specialist in Columbus, rejected Kin-

man's remarks about smoke from Pristine's incinerator. Pristine is violating its air pollution permit, White said, blaming inadequate operation and maintenance.

Still, there "really shouldn't be" anything especially dangerous about the smoke just because it comes from hazardous wastes, he said. It's just that there sometimes is too much of it.

Last December, Pristine was ordered to modify the incinerator and improve its maintenance and operations.

"We're doing it," Kinman responded.

"They are behind on those deadlines," White said.

Pristine's OEPA incinerator permit expires March 30 and may be held up until officials are satisfied the changes have been made. Kinman said he also has heard the permit may be tied to reductions in waste drums stored at Pristine.

OEPA SAYS Pristine stockpiles too much waste on its 3.2-acre facility, near the Reading well fields. Pristine is reducing that backlog, the result, in part, of technical problems at the facility, Kinman said.

The problem is complicated because the wastes are complex. A "digester" for industrial sludge is still experimental but waste to feed it has been accepted for it, Kinman said.

The City of Reading has not given Pristine a permit for a building to house a solvent recovery facility, so solvents stored for that process are being incinerated, he continued.

Two closings caused by differences with Reading officials over drum stacking and wiring have added to the backlog, Kinman said.

Today, under an agreement with OEPA, Pristine is accepting one drum of waste for every five it moves out, Kinman said.

MOVING THE old out is not that easy, because proper disposal/recovery facilities for hazardous and toxic industrial wastes are rare.



Enquirer Photo BY GERRY WOLFE

PRISTINE MANAGER Jack Salter pauses by incinerator at Reading facility.